

**Claims:**

1. A cladding element for use in a cladding element assembly, the cladding element including:
  - a substantially flat web having a pair of opposed longitudinal edges;
  - 5 a male rib formation extending at least partially along one longitudinal edge and having a pair of spaced apart inner and outer upstanding ribs and an engaging formation; and
  - a female rib formation extending at least partially along the other longitudinal edge and having an inner upstanding rib, an outer depending rib and a joining section, between the inner and outer ribs and displaced from the plane of the web, and a corresponding engaging formation, at least one of the male or female rib formations being at least partially resiliently flexible,
- 10 wherein the element is adapted for assembly with a like element by positioning of the male formation substantially within the female formation with their respective engaging formations in engagement, whereby the assembled male and female formations together form a substantially rectangular closed channel adapted for concealment of fixing means used to fix the cladding elements to a supporting structure.
- 15 2. The cladding element as claimed in claim 1, wherein, when the major visible surface of the web is the side remote from the male and female formations, the fixing means are positioned between the inner and outer ribs of the male formation.
- 20 3. The cladding element as claimed in claim 1, wherein, when the major visible surface of the web is the side adjacent to the male and female formations, the fixing means are positioned in the joining section.
- 25 4. The cladding element as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the engaging formation of the male rib formation is a flange angled inwardly and towards the web on the distal end of the inner male rib formation and the corresponding engaging formation of the female rib formation is a flange angled inwardly and away from the web on the distal end of the outer female rib formation.
- 30 5. The cladding element as claimed in claim 4, wherein at least one of the inner male rib or the outer female rib are flexible to allow resilient flexing displacement as the angled flanges ride over one another during engagement.
6. The cladding element as claimed in claim 5, wherein the male and female rib formations are both resiliently flexible.

7. The cladding element as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the engaging formation of the male rib formation is an outwardly directed flange on the distal end of the outer male rib formation and the corresponding engaging formation of the female rib formation is an outwardly directed recess on the distal end of the inner female rib formation.

8. The cladding element as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the engaging formation of the male rib formation includes:  
a flange angled inwardly and towards the web on the distal end of the inner male rib formation and the corresponding engaging formation of the female rib formation is a flange angled inwardly and away from the web on the distal end of the outer female rib formation; and

an outwardly directed flange on the distal end of the outer male rib formation and the corresponding engaging formation of the female rib formation is an outwardly directed recess on the distal end of the inner female rib formation.

9. The cladding element as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the proximal end of the outer male rib formation includes an outwardly convex formation adapted to engage with an inwardly concave formation on the proximal end of the outer male rib formation.

10. The cladding element as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the cladding element is formed from a single piece of roll formed steel.

11. The cladding element as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the male rib formation is formed by folding some of the web back on itself.

12. The cladding element as claimed in any one of claim 11, wherein a layer of adhesive is included between at least some of the web that is folded back on itself.

13. The cladding element as claimed in any one of claim 12, wherein the layer of adhesive is an adhesive strip.

14. The cladding element as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the layer of adhesive is a glue.

15. The cladding element as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the web includes a plurality of longitudinal stiffening channels.

16. The cladding element as claimed in claim 15, wherein the web includes two longitudinal stiffening channels.

17. The cladding element as claimed in claim 15 or 16, wherein the channels are convex towards the rib formations.

18. A cladding element for use in a cladding element assembly, the cladding element including:

- 5           a substantially flat web;  
          a longitudinal interlocking formation formed by folding at least some of the web back onto itself; and  
          a layer of adhesive between at least some of the adjacent web folded back on itself.

10           19. The cladding element as claimed in claim 18, wherein the layer of adhesive is an adhesive strip.

          20. The cladding element as claimed in claim 18, wherein the layer of adhesive is a glue.

15           21. A cladding element as substantially described herein with reference to Figs. 1 to 6 or Fig. 7 of the accompanying drawings.